1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
EH14 Sarakatsani EH14
Zagori

828 771 in which he lives, and sometimes more seriously by the turning of his free will away from God. God will come to a man's aid when he asks for it with a 'good heart', but he cannot enter the struggle unless a man wills it. It is upon this contingency that the Devil's opportunity and power depend.

776 787 The Sarakatsani believe that if a man is willing to deny Christ and surrender his soul to the Devil almost any material favour is obtainable, poor men gain power and wealth, and sterile women have children. The Devil keeps a ledger in which these contracts are signed in blood. This is a somewhat melodramatic image of the general belief that any sudden or extraordinary material success can only be the result of communion with the Devil. In the world as it is, occasional dealings with the Evil One may be unavoidable, but too close a communion represents the surrender of the soul.

776 831 Similarly, sexual temptation by the Devil is expressed in the belief that the Devil is able to have sexual intercourse with women in their sleep and that ladies of good luck, who are peculiarly beautiful even if their hair is sometimes in the form of snakes, try to entice lonely shepherds into 'marriage'. These, [787] generally, are the explanations accepted for erotic dreams in either sex.

776 596 One of the Devil's chief concerns is to corrupt those relationships of kinship and marriage which are instituted by God. His success is, of course, more likely where there are inherent strains, particularly between the wives of brothers still living in an extended family, and sometimes between the brothers [787] themselves. When a man attacked and nearly strangled his brother, his kinsmen said, 'The Devil has entered into him' (μπῆκε ὁ διάβολος μέσα) and they meant this in a quite literal [833] sense. When the shepherds hear of a case of father-daughter incest among the villagers of Thesprotia, they only understand this enormity as a plot of the Devil.

776 783 It must be emphasized that the sins into which a man is led by the Devil's temptation always possess a certain reference to external agency. If a man has sinned in a way not easily understandable it is said, 'The Devil pushed him' (τὸν ἔσπρωξε ὁ διάβολος). A man, by not placing his whole trust in God, inclines his desires towards material and sensual attachments. He is, then, as it were, physically unable to resist the Devil

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787 God is in communion with men not only spiritually through grace but intelligently through messages, generally warnings of physical danger which may be avoided and premonitions of misfortune or death which may not. Many men claim that just before they escaped some disaster a Saint appeared to warn them of its approach. Dreams, divination of a sheep's shoulder blade, the behaviour of various animals and birds, are all interpreted as messages from God.

771 782 In all these modes of communion a man is concerned fundamentally with establishing a relationship with God or His spiritual subordinates in order to obtain help and protection in the many difficulties which his family faces. If he is able, he must raise himself some of the way towards God; for if he succeeds in at least displaying his will in this direction there is the hope that the power of God will descend to him. The means of a poor shepherd to do this, immersed as he is in his material troubles, are slight. He may achieve a small offering and a day's fast and sexual continence before presenting an important petition to a Saint. Always he must represent to himself that he repents his sins: and he must have a 'good heart'. A 'good heart' is the will to strain towards closer fellowship with God. In this context, however, repentance and a good heart imply only weakly and indirectly the idea of fellowship with other men. As in social systems of patronage, so in their everyday religious life each family strives to achieve a particular and exclusive relationship with subordinate spiritual beings and through them to draw down to their aid more of the divine power than other families.

771 776 [782] But the grace of God, the favour of God, comes to men only through the sacrifice of Christ. It will not have escaped notice how little His name has appeared in this brief review of cult. Sarakatsani, at least, seem to direct few prayers to Him. In their religious belief God has two hypostases or persons, Father and Saviour. When they refer to God, Θεός, they normally mean the Creator, Father, Protector, and Punisher of men, present everywhere yet separated from them morally by an immense distance. Christ is the Saint, Ἅγις, or the Master, ὁ Ἀφέντης,[8] that is God in the person of a man like themselves, who sacrificed Himself that other men might overcome the

[8] See Chatzimichalis, op. cit., vol. i, Part A, p. ρλζ'.

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for physical survival. A man's state of grace is never static, always dynamic. He strains towards God but is ever pulled downward by the weight of the human condition of sin; yet periodically the saving grace of Christ's blood allows him again to approach nearer to God.

The receipt of the sacrament is not a passive act. Men must give some pledge of their will to turn to God. At the greater religious festivals, Christmas, Easter, St. George, the feasts of Assumption and St. Demetrius, when they may communicate, Sarakatsani sacrifice a lamb or sheep (θυσιάζουν, χάνουν κουρμπάνι). Other occasions when sheep are slaughtered are similarly religious as well as social events, weddings, baptisms, or the dedication (τάξιμο) of an animal to a Saint if men or sheep fall sick. Sheep are never killed for meat but only in the form of sacrifice. Preferably the animal should be male and 'clean', that is a lamb, or a ram that has not mounted a ewe. The sheep is believed to know its fate to which it goes quietly and willingly. In describing forms of sheep theft I have suggested that the sheep which support the life and honour of a family have a spiritual as well as an economic value. Of the white Easter lamb they say, 'we bleed it to honour Christ' (τὸ ματώνομε νὰ τιμήσωμε τὸν Χριστό). A shepherd skins a sheep with swift and confident strokes of the knife but his face is strained and concentrated as he cuts into the artery in the animal's neck. With this sacrificial stroke he gives something of himself. The Sarakatsani are conscious of this element of reciprocity. As Christ pours out his blood to open a way between men and God, so the Sarakatsanos pours out the surrogate blood of his sheep to the same end. And since the sheep is the means of establishing a partial relationship between man and God, those who share its flesh are participating in a form of sanctified communion. And, for the same reason, God chooses to communicate intelligently with men through the shadow markings on the shoulder blade and the condition of the liver.

A man must prepare himself in other ways. He must fast for forty days before the beginning of the 'Great Week', and in this matter the Sarakatsani are more strict than many villagers. Olives, cheese, eggs, milk, meat, fish are not eaten. During Easter week itself even bread is abandoned and the

knees, others leaned back against the wall or the divan with a knee cocked up to support an outstretched arm, their fingers allowing the amber beads of a *komboloi* to fall at intervals of a few seconds. All were luxuriously asprawl and akimbo, and the company bristled with shepherd's crooks. They were laid across their laps or tilted at a slope over their shoulders. Some of the shepherds' crooks, stafts grasped by gnarled fists, stood bolt upright; others were propped against the wall; the top of each well-worn shaft was joined to a twirling hook carved in the shape of a dolphin, a dragon, a ram's head, or a snake.

Only a couple of the guests were dressed in black kilts. The others wore rough and hairy black jodhpurs. A few of the wildest and shaggiest were shod in rawhide moccasins tilting up like canoes, worn over swaths of white wool bound about their ankles with broad thongs. All of them wore their soft black skullcaps rakishly askew. Except for the white and pleated bridegroom, who stood by the door receiving horny handshakes and whiskery embraces from the guests, nearly all the people in the room were middle-aged or stricken in years. They conversed at the top of their voices; used to shouting against the wind to each other from hilltop to hilltop, they find it hard to modulate their voices at close quarters, so the smallest talk is stentorian, and the only alternative is a collusive and almost inaudible whisper, to which they suddenly resort if they notice a look of suffering on their interlocutor's face.

Their thick rural tones sounded different from those of Thrace. They resembled, rather, the dialect of Roumeli and of parts of Epirus, much further west; an accent which consists of suppressing all final vowels and most of those in the middle of words as well, giving their speech an oddly chopped and consonantal ring. It was made harder to follow by a private vocabulary for the details of their calling. Different kinds of springs, qualities of grass, ways of hut building and bell tuning, breeds of sheep and goats and horses and watchdogs all have special names. They have their own expressions for the tupping, lambing, weaning, shearing, carding, spinning, milking, seething, scalding, path finding, tent pitching, camp striking, trough scooping, and weather divining around which their whole life turns. How should a layman know that the reddish- or dark-faced sheep are called *Katsoúla*, or that belling them is called "ironing" or "arming" them? Or how many *okas* of bronze, and of what pitch, should be slung around the neck of a bellwether? Or that the best time to arm the flocks

spread sudden panics, and when they are not actively engaged in evildoing, they skulk out of sight but within earshot and play their flutes.

Good and evil omens, as of old, are discerned in the flight of birds. The nomads abhor eagles and vultures and all birds of prey that hover on high: they belong to the devil, and are thus in league with the evil spirits. When these harbingers of peril hang in midair above a caravan, they are spying on the destination. The nomads' abomination of these birds may also spring from the occasional raids of eagles, when newborn kids are carried away bleating piteously into the sky. The nomads prophesy from entrails, and like most ancient and modern Greeks, they read the future in the markings on sheep's shoulder blades. Their sacrifices, *kourbania*, are frequent. A *Pitta*, a kind of cake which is baked in a wide metal pan, is the rather gloomy fare at most of their feasts, as they consider it wrong to kill and eat an animal without some ritual excuse. So, as the only meat they get is that when a beast is slaughtered for a sacrificial occasion, they pine for these pretexts, even when the cause is a distressing one. A wedding or the christening of a *tsellingas*' son, the illness of one of their community, an epidemic among the flocks, the birth of a seven-month child, the arrival of an honored guest, or the end of shearing — all these are occasions for meat. The sacrificial beast is always roasted whole on a spit, and its throat is cut as it lies on a flat branch with its eyes looking into the sun. The act is surrounded by much mystery, and the nomads peer at the insides for mantic significance; and at Easter, a bloody cross from the paschal lamb is dabbed on the shoulders of children.

The approach to Lent, and especially the Saturday night and the early hours of the Sunday before Lent, used to be the signal for much behavior which was not found elsewhere. The wearing of masks, the painting of faces, the donning of whiskers and beards of goat's hair, and the young men dressing up as women — all this, with copious drinking, horseplay, and cheerful frisking about among the wigwams, is pretty current practice still, a token of rustic carnival zest. But formerly it took a much more stylized form. A heavily painted young man clad in a scarlet dress and long goatskin locks was chosen as a bride, and a whiskered and skin-clad comrade represented the groom; others were rigged out as the priest, the *koumbaros*, and the wedding guests. A mock Christian marriage was then irreverently solemnized, followed by dances which were far more uninhibited than are those at a real marriage. The bridal

/256 cont./

527 solemnly and in a high voice, speaks these words: "May ewes and goats
233 be born." She is offered cakes and extended wishes for a long life
825 and happiness. According to Madame Hadjimichali, the women can predict
789 from the crackling of the fire whether the year ahead will be fruitful or
[574] or disastrous.
[787]

The first day of the Orthodox Advent (40 days before Christmas) a
[796] long tree trunk is put in the hearth and allowed to burn for a while.
Then it is extinguished and put to one side. This procedure is invariably
repeated each morning. On Christmas morning the oldest woman of the family
lights what is left and carries it lighted to the stroungha (Fkg. 73)
where she buries it at the entrance where the animals pass. (24)

24. A practice reported by Madame Hadjimichali
[114] (ibid., p. ϱν') but that we ourselves have
not encountered.

527 On New Year's day, according to our own observations (on Christmas day
233 according to those of Madame Hadjimichali), (25)
825
789
262
531
[114]

25. Ibid., A. II, pp. 346-350. This difference in the data is not surprising since the Sarakatsani groups are numerous and variations of customs are inevitable as a result of acculturation. It is to be noted that the non-Sarakatsani population make a pastry on New Year's day. It is possible that the statements of Madame Hadjimichali report a state of affairs before our own investigation. In this connection we wish to emphasize that Madame Hadjimichali gives a very fine description of the cakes in question, with superb drawings.

each mother of a family prepares a pastry decorated with motifs in relief, which represent /257/ a stroungha with sheep, imprints of horseshoes, a dog, ~~shepherd~~ reeds, distaffs, vipers and last of all scorpions. The whole is an evocation of the economic life of the Sarakatsani, the stroungha,

A, /See p.100--Analyst/

/265 cont./
them salt (44) and incense. (45)

44. Because of its preservative properties which analogously act as a curative in numerous cases.

45. Incense is a means of purification.

Ἰωαννίου Μάγνητος: Πρὸς Τρίχωνα, M.P.G. 6, 667.

A young man told us that during his military service he suffered from nightmares. He therefore put a little salt in his pocket and got rid of them. Carsten Hoeg, for his part, (46)

46. Ibid., vol. II.

has recorded an account according to which the monks of a monastery one day caught a demon that was hiding in the church. They shut doors and windows tight and burned much incense. The demon suffocated.

However, these practices are not the only ones. There are others. The following account is very significant:

A young shepherd had left his flock in order to steal some bunches of grapes in the vicinity. Coming back he heard violins that were invisible and could not be accounted for, the melody from which rose up in the nearby ravines and gorges. The shepherd hurridly departed. But as he approached a bridge thrown over a torrent he saw a donkey stretched out in the middle and very near it a cat that circled it and seemed to stand guard over the sleeping donkey. /266/ Our shepherd immediately understood that these were two demons metamorphosed as donkey and cat (the shapes they prefer). Thereupon, drawing out his pistol, he fired a shot by pressing the trigger with the fingers of his left hand. Immediately, the cat vanished in the air while the donkey got up, took several steps and exploded with a noise of thunder.

There are numerous conclusions that one may draw from this account. The apparition of supernatural beings is accompanied by mysterious music. (47)

47. See farther on, the case of fairies.

The demons may take the shape of an animal and belong to the "left side," or accursed side, of the world which is in two parts the right being

/270 cont./

776 must then dipose them favorably toward her child. In order to do this
779 she places near it a cup full of sweets and honey, offering it at one
[782] and the same time to the fairies and so that "fate in store for it may be sweet"-- a procedure with a double efficacy. According to the report
[789] of Madame Hadjimichali, the Sarakatsani the next day look for a black dot on the nose of the child; its position reveals the verdict of the moires. Placed near the forehead, it foretells a happy fate; near the base of the nose it is a sign of ill fortune. (59)

59. Ibid., D.I., p.[illegible]

776 The last category of supernatural beings which threaten men are the
[538] ogres, fabulous personages, heroes of numerous tales especially meant for children and told in front of the fire during the long winter evenings. (60)

60. Carsten Höeg: Ibid., A. p. 50 f., presents a regular collection of stories of ogres.

We shall not dwell further on these legends which require literary analysis.

751 The magic rites that protect against illness aim more at prevention
789 than cure. By enriching the body's potential one avoids "evils." The
[753] idea that the Sarakatsani form about the latter is rather confusing, supernatural attack and disease or physiological disorder being very often identified in their thinking. Hence magical intervention must be exerted in connection with particular circumstances in the lives of men and animals--circumstances of "transition" according to the current terminology--without detriment to other interventions on various occasions.

844 The moment the child comes into the world its lips are smeared with
751 some drops of blood from the woman who has borne it. If it is born with
789 a caul, the membrane that covers its face is carefully removed by being
822 drawn toward the chin and not toward the forehead, in order to avoid
845 strabismus. The membrane then serves as an amulet. In order to stop the
[752] bleeding of the umbilical cord they put on the bleeding end the ashes of a burned bit of the father's cloak.

754 /282 cont./
602 though no family relationship binds them to their victim.

787 /283/ FORECASTING THE FUTURE.

This subject is linked, sometimes to natural phenomena, sometimes to the life of animals, sometimes to human influences.

The ideas that define the corresponding phenomena and that raise them to the level of portent are not always clear. There are cases where they remain in shadow. Phenomena and ideas are concretely presented as follows:

787 When a dog howls mournfully in the night death will strike a member
763 of the family. This animal whose occult capacities and mythological
825 relations with the underworld we are acquainted with scents the approach of Charon and laments the imminent disappearance of the men to whom he is bound.

If a crow flies vertically above a person, the life of the latter is in danger. This black bird personifying mourning and living on carcasses is presumed already to be interested in the person.

787 When a snake, an animal that knows the secrets of life and death, bars
825 the path of a passerby while heading "toward the sun," the east, hence the
823 cardinal point corresponding to life and favorable forces--it is a good portent. But if it heads towards the west, the darkness, (90) misfortune

90. It is well to recall here that a large number of European beliefs place the realm of the dead in a country to be found in the direction of the setting sun. The priests of Athens, seeking to incite the Furies against the "traitor" Alcibiades, pronounced their curses while turned toward the west: ΠΑΟΥΤΑΡΧΟΥ : [illegible]

22-32.--P.M. Schuhl: Ibid., p. 38.

awaits the passerby.

787 If there are a couple of snakes who separate suddenly, taking
825 opposite directions, a married couple symbolized by the reptiles whose role
586

/283 cont./

787 825 582 in sexual life has already been emphasized, runs the risk of divorcing. That event will, in one stroke, lead to serious consequences for everybody--probably disturbances of a social order, in view of what has been said in connection with marriage and the functions of kinship. (91)

[171] [833] [155] 91. In Greek folklore, the couple is very often represented by a pair of snakes because of the role of the latter in fecundity. Hence to combat impotence it is necessary to find two snakes that copulate during the month of May, to cut off their heads and give them to the patient. The latter must sleep with his wife while keeping the heads in his pocket: W.H.D. Rouse: Folk-lore from the Southern Sporades /cited in English/, p. 157.

233 825 787 Sometimes the flock in the pasture will suddenly divide into two groups; this is a very bad sign for the men and their affairs. Perhaps they must be apprehensive lest this division foretell a conflict within the Tséligato, implying its breaking-up with /284/ all the disastrous consequences that may result from this. It seems that the unity of the flocks symbolizes that of the men.

825 787 [171] Another evil portent for man and his affairs is being startled in the morning by a hare (92) or a partridge which suddenly and loudly takes

92. The hare brings bad luck. An ancient belief reported by Suidas and very widespread in Greece. See Ph. Koukoulès: Ibid., vol. A. II.

off. The man is then overtaken by troxa, according to the Sarakatsani term, which means a state of terror that represents an imminent, very disagreeable surprise.

823 787 787 A rock that suddenly detaches itself from the mountain and rolls to the bottom of a ravine is a dreadful portent. It is a portent of death.

787 [887] [554] However, the best means of foretelling the future is "the reading of the shoulderblade." The moment a lamb roasted on the spit is carved up, one of the old men, usually the head of the family of the Tséligas,

/284 cont./

787 887 554 takes the bare shoulderblade and, examining the multiformed spots of the marrow made visible by the cooking and irregularities of the bone, announces the portents. The drawing, no. 102, shows the marks and their meaning.

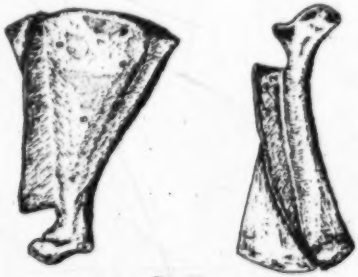

Fig. 102

Foretelling the future on the basis of the shoulderblade. 1. Future law-suit.--2. Paying out or taking in.--3. Arrest.--4. Death (man-woman).--5. Enemy.--6. War.--7. Encirclement by bandits.

619 /285/ The portents have to do with the life of individuals, the family, the group and even national life--facts which show once again how much the Sarakatsani feels himself to be integrated in his nation.

787 171 Divination by the shoulderblade is practiced in all of continental Greece. It seems that its roots go far back in time. According to Professor G. Megas, divination is bound up with the mysteries of Mithra and was introduced from Egypt into Greece. (93)

93. G. Megas: Βιβλίον Ὀρνιθοσκοπικόν, p. 10.

It is found in Byzantium and among numerous peoples (94)

94. N. ΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ : Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα, Τ Α', p. 78.

Let us cite also a special study on M. ΨΙΛΑΚΟΣ

787
171

/285 cont./

in the periodical Philologus, pp. 166-168, according to a Viennese code: G. Megas: Ibid., p. 5. (Huns, Mongols, Yugoslavs, Scots, Corsicans, Spaniards, French, Germans, English and as far as the region of Labrador). (95)

95. K. Birket-Smith: Histoire de la civilisation, p. 390.

According to the same author, its very large dissemination in Byzantium is due to the fact that the Church, which did not tolerate the pagan methods of divination on the occasion of sacrifices, showed itself more tolerant of it /scapulamancy/ (96)

96. G. Megas: Ibid., p. 21; citing also the work of Bouche-Leclercq, Histoire de la divination, I, 180: Scapulamancy /divination by the scapula/, about which we are informed by Psellus, must have been one of the last transformations of empyromancy/divination by fire/ born of the bloody sacrifice.

We believe that this hypothesis is well founded, for it is corroborated by that fact that the lambs of Easter, of St. George, etc., are the main objects of observation. There is thus an intervention of religion in this practice which divests it of its original pagan character.

[178]

787

Connections between the signs of the shoulderblade, on the one hand, and the life of men, on the other, are justified in the thinking of those who use scapulamancy by their intent. Before the animal is put to death its owner must plan the subjects about which he will consult the shoulder-blade. (97)

97. See the code published by G. Megas: Ibid., p. 8: "Take a ewe or a lamb and after you have named what you want to find out, kill it..."

* * * *

/350 cont./

805 the night the height of the /351/ moon, but chiefly the appearance
821 and position of the stars and constellations on the vault of heaven
[233] fulfill the same function. When, for example, Gemini is found near the zenith, the Sarakatsani send the flocks out to their nocturnal pasture. The same is true of the positions of Mars, the Pleiades, etc.

821 In second place come the meteorological forecasts.

825 What is striking is that the weather predictions are based chiefly
787 on some signs derived from the behavior of the flocks and the wild animals. It would seem that on this point the Sarakatsani trusts the instinct of the animals much more than the phenomena of nature (winds, clouds, color of the sky at twilight, etc.). It is very probable that his attention, always polarized by his principal interest, the livestock, induces him to look at the world largely through it.

Thus, when during a sunny day the sheep, shortly before noon, gather together and sleep in the sun, huddled against each other, it is a sign of bad weather. If, in winter, the sheep browse voraciously, snow can be expected the next day. When the beasts of burden, grazing on the heights, start to come down again, the weather will be bad (rain or storm). The howling of jackals and wolves is a portent of bad weather. When it is fair and the owl settled in a spot usually sheltered from the sun (a gorge, for example), starts to hoot, the weather will change and become bad. On the other hand, if it is raining and the owl chooses a place generally exposed to the sun (a hillside with a southern exposure) to make itself hear, this means that the weather will improve.

759 In the third place, knowledge bearing on therapy should be mentioned.
752 There are among the Sarakatsani specialists who practice orthopedics and kinesitherapy. In cases of fracture, dislocation and sprain, the practitioner uses ligatures or other manipulations that enable the bones
759 or displaced joints to recover. In case of lumbago, the patient must,

/382 cont./

182 81 As for Sarakatsani knowledge, we must recall that it is dominated by utilitarianism, the advantages that may be derived from it, and not by disinterestedness. A struggler is not a contemplator, and the Sarakatsani are strugglers (isolation, herding). For their society and their kind of life, "scientific" research would be a luxury, aside from the fact that they lack the means to attain the knowledge that they lack. On the other hand, Sarakatsani knowledge is relevant to both /383/ material life (technology, crafts and herding) and the social man; it carries the two-fold concern of ensuring man's subsistence and organizing him more effectively economically as well as socially (kinship, 182 812 cooperation, etc.). Moreover, the Sarakatsani have need of a certain ideology capable of justifying their condition and of leading to a mythologizing of certain aspects of their existence which is all the more necessary since their life is beset with difficulties. Their constant struggle, their sacrifice and solidarity, their austere regime, etc., can be maintained only if these things are idealized and surrounded with myth. When you ask a Sarakatsani to look down on his life and express judgments about it, you are astonished to hear him idealize his condition even in its least attractive aspects.

182 787 755 (787) The limitations of knowledge, as we have noted, encourage the appeal to cosmological and anthropological myth, which is expressed, as we have also said, in curative magic and a partial syncretism with Christianity. The subjects that dominate these two spheres of ideas and the practices derived from them are fecundity, fertility, abundance, prosperity, health, protection against evil influences, finally foretelling the future, and these with respect to men as well as animals. The practices in question therefore protect the family and the kingroup, economic life and resources, in fact the entire community. This point opens the way